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UNCLAS VATICAN 005848

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (MENNUTI)

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: HOLY SEE NOMINATES NEW DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER:
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON PIETRO PAROLIN

1. (U) POPE JOHN PAUL II HAS APPOINTED MONSIGNOR PIETRO PAROLIN TO BE THE HOLY SEE'S DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER (UNDER-SECRETARY FOR THE SECTION FOR RELATIONS WITH STATES OF THE

SIPDIS

SECRETARIAT OF STATE). PAROLIN REPLACES ARCHBISHOP-

SIPDIS

DESIGNATE CELESTINO MIGLIORE WHO HAS BEEN APPOINTED THE HOLY SEE'S PERMANENT OBSERVER AT THE U.N. IN NEW YORK.

2. (U) PIETRO PAROLIN WAS BORN IN SCHIAVON, IN VICENZA PROVINCE, IN THE NORTH OF ITALY IN 1955. AFTER HIS ORDINATION AS A CATHOLIC PRIEST HE TOOK UP GRADUATE STUDIES
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IN CANON LAW AND DIPLOMACY AND ENTERED THE HOLY SEE'S DIPLOMATIC SERVICE IN 1986. PAROLIN SERVED AT HOLY SEE NUNCIATURES IN NIGERIA AND MEXICO, AND MOST RECENTLY AS DIRECTOR FOR SPAIN, ANDORRA, ITALY, SAN MARINO AND CONCORDAT ISSUES AT THE VATICAN'S FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE SPEAKS ITALIAN, ENGLISH, FRENCH, AND SPANISH.

3. (SBU) PAROLIN WAS A 2001 INTERNATIONAL VISITOR TO THE UNITED STATES FROM THE VATICAN, AND HAS BEEN A GOOD CONTACT FOR POST. WE WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH HIM IN HIS CAPACITY AS COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR INDONESIA DURING THE EAST TIMOR CRISIS. HE HAS CONSISTENTLY PROVEN HIMSELF AN OPEN-MINDED "VATICANISTA" WHO HAS BEEN GROOMED FOR GREATER RESPONSIBILITY IN THE HOLY SEE. HE WOULD HAVE BEEN AN OBVIOUS CHOICE FOR A PAPAL NUNCIO -- A COMMON ONWARD ASSIGNMENT FOR VATICAN MFA COUNTRY DIRECTORS -- BUT WE SUSPECT HIS SUPERIOR ABILITIES, AS WELL AS PERHAPS FAMILY REASONS (WE KNOW HIS ELDERLY MOTHER'S ILLNESS SLIGHTLY ABBREVIATED HIS IV PROGRAM), HAVE KEPT HIM AT THE VATICAN WHERE HE HAS NOW LEAP-FROGGED INTO A MORE SENIOR POSITION. PAROLIN WILL LIKELY CARRY ON THE TRADITION OF FRIENDLINESS, OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS ESTABLISHED BY HIS PREDECESSOR, AND WILL BE AN EFFECTIVE HIGH-LEVEL INTERLOCUTOR FOR THE U.S.

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